



# FSIS Constituent Update

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Protecting Public Health Through Food Safety

## Poll Shows Americans are Confident in U.S. Food Supply

A Gallup poll released earlier this week reported that the vast majority of Americans, more than 85 percent, said they are confident in the federal government's ability to protect the nation's food supply. The polling results also show that Americans feel more confident about government food safety programs today than they did a few years ago.

Thirty-one percent of the respondents said they had "a great deal" of confidence in the food supply, up from 21 percent in July 2001 and 19 percent in July 2002. "This percentage has more than doubled since 1999, when just 15 percent of Americans had a great deal of confidence in the government's ability to keep the food supply safe," said Heather Mason, Gallup contributing editor.

The survey also noted that fifty-four percent said they had a "fair amount" of confidence while only fourteen percent said they had "not much or "no confidence" in government food safety programs.

The positive poll numbers can be partly attributed to USDA's prompt and thorough response to the discovery of a cow with BSE in December 2003. In addition, the unprecedented steps that FSIS has taken in the past few years to implement science-based policies to combat illness-causing pathogens on raw meat and poultry products have also helped to achieve a safer food supply.

Reports of increased consumer confidence in the government's ability to protect the food supply comes at a time when the Centers for Disease Control is reporting a 36 percent drop in the number of illnesses caused by *E. coli* O157:H7 as well as recent reports by FSIS that there has been a 62 percent decline in the number of ground beef regulatory samples testing positive for *E. coli* O157:H7.

The poll is based on telephone interviews with 1,005 adults in the United States and was conducted between July 8 and 11, 2004. The margin of sampling error is plus or minus three percentage points.

## Export Requirement Updates

The [Library of Export Requirements](#) has been updated to reflect changes in export requirements for the following countries:

**Australia**  
**Hong Kong**  
**Macedonia**  
**Qatar**  
**Romania**

Complete information is currently available at:  
[www.fsis.usda.gov/OFO/export/explib.htm](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/OFO/export/explib.htm)



# Two Opportunities Remain to Attend *E. coli* O157:H7 Workshops

The final workshops on new directives designed to strengthen *E. coli* O157:H7 prevention procedures will be held August 28 and September 11 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. The three FSIS directives to be covered during the sessions are: Directive 10,010.1 Revision 1, Microbiological Testing Program and Other Verification Activities for *E. coli* O157:H7 in Raw Ground Beef Products and Raw Ground Beef Components and Beef Patty Components; Directive 6420.0, Verification of Procedures for Controlling Fecal Material, Ingesta and Milk in Slaughter Operations; and Directive 5000.2, Review of Establishment Data by Inspection Program Personnel. They are designed for operators of small and very small federally-inspected plants, state-inspected plants, federal and state inspection personnel, members of academia and other interested parties.

FSIS will web cast the workshop from Philadelphia on August 28. Individuals who are not able to travel to Philadelphia will have an opportunity to watch the meeting in progress and ask questions in real time through their computers. To connect to the web cast, participants will need a computer, speakers and access to the Internet. Several people can participate from one location.

There are 50 slots available for the web cast. Registration is required for the web cast and will be accepted through August 18, 2004. Priority will be given to small and very small federally-inspected plants, state-inspected plants, federal and state inspection personnel, as well as those hosting the web cast event for a large audience. Please note, pre-registration is required. To register visit: [www.fsis.usda.gov/News\\_&\\_Events/Registration\\_082804\\_Webcast](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/Registration_082804_Webcast)

The remaining workshops are scheduled as follows:

**August 28:** Crown Plaza Philadelphia, 1800 Market Street, Philadelphia, Pa. 19103, (215) 561-7500

**September 11:** The Ambassador, 3100 I-40 West, Amarillo, Texas 79102, (806) 358-6161

To pre-register to attend the workshops, please call (866) 553-3052 or visit: [www.fsis.usda.gov/News/Meetings\\_&\\_Events](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/News/Meetings_&_Events)

## THIS WEEK'S HOT WEB LINKS

### Production and Inspection

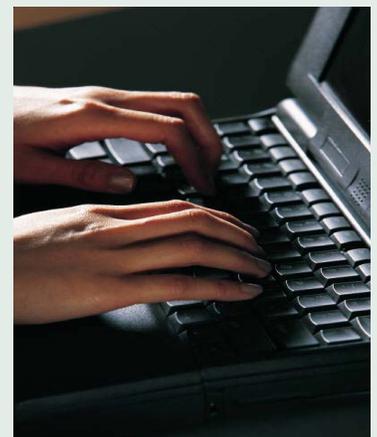
[www.fsis.usda.gov/fact\\_sheets/Production\\_&\\_Inspection\\_Fact\\_Sheets/](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/fact_sheets/Production_&_Inspection_Fact_Sheets/)

### USDA Meat & Poultry Hotline

[www.fsis.usda.gov/Food\\_Safety\\_Education/USDA\\_Meat\\_&\\_Poultry\\_Hotline/](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Food_Safety_Education/USDA_Meat_&_Poultry_Hotline/)

### Keeping Food Safe During an Emergency

[www.fsis.usda.gov/News\\_&\\_Events/NR\\_081204\\_01/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/NR_081204_01/index.asp)



## FSIS Proposes Equalizing Requirements for Supervisory Visits

FSIS has issued a proposed rule harmonizing the requirements for supervisory visits at certified foreign establishments with those of domestic plants.

The proposed rule amends FSIS regulations to require foreign inspection agencies to conduct supervisory visits at intervals sufficient to verify that the establishment remains eligible for certification to export to the United States. The new language reestablishes the frequency requirement as “periodic supervisory visits.”

Comments must be received on or before October 18. Written comments may be submitted to the FSIS Docket Room, Reference Docket #03-033P, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Service, Room 102 Cotton Annex, 300 12th Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-3700. Any comments received will be available for public inspection in the FSIS Docket Room from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday and will be posted at [www.fsis.usda.gov/OPPDE/rdad/FRDockets.htm](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/OPPDE/rdad/FRDockets.htm).

For further information contact Sally White, director, international equivalence staff, FSIS’ Office of International Affairs, at (202) 720-6400.

## National Advisory Committee Seeking Nominees

USDA is seeking nominees for membership on the National Advisory Committee on Meat and Poultry Inspection (NACMPI).

Membership is drawn from a broad range of groups interested in food safety, including producers, processors, exporters and importers of meat and poultry products, as well as those in academia, federal and state government officials and consumers.

Names of nominees and their typed curricula vitae, or resume, should be sent to Dr. Barbara J. Masters, acting administrator, FSIS, USDA, Room 405-Aerospace Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-3700. The application must be postmarked no later than September 5, 2004.

Applications are also available online at: [www.fsis.usda.gov/OPPDE/NACMPI/Nominations.htm](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/OPPDE/NACMPI/Nominations.htm).

## Featured Office of the Week



### Labor and Employee Relations Division

The Labor and Employee Relations Division’s (LERD) mission is to prevent and correct conduct and performance problems that can significantly interfere with the agency’s vital public health goals. To accomplish this important task, LERD provides vital leadership and helpful advice to managers handling labor relation issues. The Voluntary Dispute Intervention Program is the most recent example of the division’s efforts to address conflicts and disagreements in the workplace before they affect the agency’s important public health mission. For more information visit: [www.fsis.usda.gov/About\\_FSIS/OM/](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/About_FSIS/OM/)

# Salmonella Data Clarification

In explanatory notes accompanying 2003 Salmonella testing data, a reference was made to a steady decrease in positive samples for each year of HACCP verification testing even when four years of data were weighted against the proportion of samples in each of seven categories in 2000. The calculations were made using the proportions from the 2001 data, rather than 2000. FSIS regrets any confusion this error might have caused.

## Upcoming National Advisory Committee on Microbiological Criteria for Foods (NACMCF) Meetings

The National Advisory Committee on Microbiological Criteria for Foods (NACMCF) will hold public meetings Aug. 24-27. The full committee will discuss performance standards for ground chicken and ground turkey, the scientific basis for establishing safety-based “use by” date labels for refrigerated ready-to-eat foods and scientific criteria for redefining pasteurization. All meetings are open to the public and will be held at the Hotel Monaco, 700 F Street, N.W., Washington, D.C.

The full committee will meet Friday, Aug. 27 from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Three NACMCF subcommittees will meet prior to the full committee meeting. The Performance Standards for Ground Chicken/Ground Turkey subcommittee will meet Aug. 24, from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Aug. 25, from 8:30 a.m. to noon. The Scientific Criteria for Redefining Pasteurization subcommittee will meet Aug. 25, from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. The Scientific Basis for Establishing Safety-Based “Use By” Date Labeling for Refrigerated Ready-to-Eat Foods subcommittee will meet Aug. 26, from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

For further information contact Karen Thomas, FSIS Office of Public Health Science, Microbiology Division at (202) 690-6620.

### To Contact the Constituent Update Editor

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## The USDA Food Safety Mobile: Taking Food Safety Education on the Road

The USDA Food Safety Mobile is a 35-foot, recreational-style vehicle covered with a bold, eye-catching design and prominent food safety messages, including the four Fight BAC!® messages of the Partnership for Food Safety Education.

**August 26, 2004**  
WIC Anniversary,  
Maine

**September 3-6, 2004**  
Hopkinton State Fair  
Contoocook, N.H.

**September 8, 2004**  
Elementary School  
Sanbornton, N.H.

For more dates visit:  
[www.fsis.usda.gov/  
Food\\_Safety\\_Education/  
Mobile\\_Events\\_by\\_Date/](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Food_Safety_Education/Mobile_Events_by_Date/)